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Comments on NSC Staff Draft of Parts I and II of US Programs for National Security

1. We consider this draft NSC paper of such great importance that we have carefully analyzed it, in the light of the CIA contribution in draft appendix A(SE-13). Are comments are in two groups: (a) major deficiencies of the present draft as a whole, which would require substantial rewriting; and (b) specific comments on a paragraph by paragraph basis, with recommended alternate wording where feasible. It is possible that our major comments are more applicable to the forthcoming Part III (Programs), than to Parts I and II, but we believe that, if correct, they also ^{recognize} require changes in Parts I and II. Moreover, we/that our comments deal as much with policy as with intelligence problems, and thus might go beyond CIA's proper role in the NSC Staff. However, these policy considerations are derived directly from the intelligence implications of the probable world situation, as outlined by CIA's contribution, and thus may be perfectly legitimate for CIA to raise.

I. BROAD COMMENTS ON PARTS I AND II.

A. The Proposed US Strategy is not adequate to meet the Probably Situation.

1. ^a ~~A second~~ major deficiency of the present draft is that the basic US strategy proposed in Part II may well be insufficient to cope adequately with the deteriorating situation posed in Part I. The two major conclusions of Part II - that we should continue our present strategy of building an adequate position of strength and that we should act cautiously to avoid war until we have achieved this position - are both sound as far as they go. But how about the timing of our programs? We are on "the right course" in proceeding to build up our strength, but in view of the critical world situation forecast in Part I are we proceeding fast enough on this course?

2. Part I makes the following major points: (a) that overall Soviet orbit strength will increase substantially over the next two years, perhaps more than previously estimated; (b) that the danger of general war, either through miscalculation or deliberate Soviet action will be more acute than ever before; (c) that Western Europe will still not be defensible even by mid-1954; and (d) that the Western position in the Near and Far East will remain precarious, and may well seriously deteriorate. Do not these conclusions call into question the basic conclusion in para. 39 of Part I (on page 25) that if general war can be avoided through mid-1953 we will "have passed safely through the most critical and dangerous period?" While US and NATO rearmament will have narrowed the gap between Western and Soviet strength in being, will we, in

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view of the above factors, have reached by mid-1953 such a position of strength that the most critical and dangerous period will have passed?

3. Although CIA does not know enough about projected US programs to definitively challenge Part I's conclusion, we feel able from an intelligence point of view to challenge it on several grounds. First, for the reasons given in Section B below, we question whether the most critical period will have passed until a sizeable area of Western Europe is secure from Soviet assault; Second, the growth of Soviet, Chinese Communist, and Satellite strength (including Soviet atomic capabilities against the US and its allies and Soviet air defense capabilities) may be such over the next two years as to largely offset any increased Western capabilities and to leave us relatively little better off than we are now. Paragraph 8d of the draft implicitly recognized this possibility, so far as US and Soviet atomic capabilities and air defenses are concerned, by calling for estimates on these critical points. Third, in the absence of more vigorous countermeasures in the Near and Far East, the already precarious Western position may well seriously deteriorate, although it is uncertain how vital any losses in these areas might be. Finally, there may still be an acute danger of general war after mid-1953, for which the Western Powers, except possibly the US itself, will still be relatively poorly prepared.

4. Under these circumstances can we accept the basic conclusion of Part I that by mid-1953 the most critical period will have passed? And if this conclusion is incorrect does not our basic strategy in Part II require revision, chiefly in the direction of accelerating the development of free world strength? In other words, while the basic principles of our strategy and policy are sound, mustn't we hasten the implementation of these principles?

B. The Crucial Importance of Western European Defense is Underestimated.

5. Another fundamental problem one basic to the entire NSC-68 program and in fact to our entire foreign policy, arises from the statement on page 17 in para. 23 that by mid-1953 our strength should be such as to "permit confidence in achieving eventual military victory...." in event of global war. We consider that this estimate may be basically incorrect because by mid-1953 the USSR will still be able to overrun Western Europe. In this event it is difficult to see how anything but prolonged stalemate could result. Therefore, how firm is our estimate of ultimate victory? On what is it based? Admittedly the USSR would not be able to invade the Western

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Hemisphere or to cripple the US; on the other hand how would we expect to achieve military victory? We would be able to mount a continuing, heavy air offensive against Eurasia, and to hurt the enemy far more than he can hurt us. However, would this be sufficient to bring ultimate victory as he meanwhile mobilized the resources of Europe against us? Isn't the only way to force the USSR to its knees to mount not only a continued air offensive but also to hold a vital area on the Eurasian continent, (and Western Europe is the only feasible place) from which we can chew up his conventional strength and threaten the USSR itself? Isn't it accepted by the military that if we lose our foothold in Western Europe, we probably will be unable to recover a bridgehead in strength? If we cannot get back onto the Eurasian continent, isn't a prolonged stalemate more likely than victory?

6. This analysis is designed to prove one major point — that if we are to achieve ultimate victory instead of stalemate, it may be imperative that we retain a sizeable bridgehead in Western Europe, from which we can expand as our mobilization progresses, and which will permit us to use short range as well as long range air power. Therefore, isn't the holding of part of Western Europe our number one strategic priority, more important even than building up our own mobilization base? Mustn't our strategy and our programs be geared to holding a sizeable area of Western Europe at all costs? What is the use of building a base for rapid wartime mobilization in the US itself if by the time this mobilization is completed, we would find that Western Europe has been lost and cannot be recovered for several more years, if at all. Isn't it better to devote first priority to strengthening ourselves in this exposed but vital area, to create a strong covering force that can hold the vital parts of Western Europe and behind which we can mobilize?

7. The present draft states in para. 54 on p. 36 that the building of adequate strength to defend Western Europe is one of the three basic objectives of the NSC 68 programs. At the same time it admits in para. 29 that this will probably not be possible until sometime after mid-1954. Yet nowhere in the paper is it suggested that this objective is so fundamental to the achievement of our ultimate victory that the US programs to accomplish this objective should be rapidly stepped up. The failure to identify the critical nature of this problem and the urgency of revising our programs to cope with it is a fundamental deficiency of Part II of the present draft report. This failure also calls into question the conclusion to Part I in para. 39 p. 25, that by mid-1953 we will "have passed safely through the most critical and dangerous period." We question whether it is possible to justify this conclusion until we are confident that a sizeable area of Western Europe is initially defensible against a Soviet assault.

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8. If the above analysis is correct then it has major implications for our MSC 68 programs. It means that not only must we shift more emphasis from building a mobilization base to building immediate strength in being but that we must build this strength in the vital area -- Western Europe. It means that we must assign far higher priority and far more resources to building up General Eisenhower's forces. It means, in essence, that insofar as our European NAT allies cannot or will not achieve the minimum MTDP objectives which SHAPE tells us are essential, then the US must fill up the gap, regardless of the cost. Moreover, this cost is by no means beyond our resources. In over-all terms there might be a NATO "deficit" of 10-15 billion over the next three years, only a fraction of the well over 100 billion we plan to spend during that period on US defenses.

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